

The Voter Confidence and Increased Accessibility Act of 2009 (HR 2894)

Making Sure Votes Count and Are Counted

Voting is the foundation of democracy, but there are still states and jurisdictions in the United States that use unauditable electronic voting machines whose vote tallies cannot be confirmed independently. To ensure the integrity of our elections, Rep. Holt introduced bipartisan legislation in the 111th Congress. Entitled The Voter Confidence and Increased Accessibility Act of 2009 (HR 2894), it would create a national standard that will ensure the accessibility, verifiability, and auditability of every vote in the United States. Votes are valuable, and each voter should have the knowledge – and the confidence – that his or her vote was recorded and counted as intended. Enacting this legislation would be a big step in restoring that confidence.

Need for Legislation

In every federal election that has taken place since the Help America Vote Act was enacted in 2002, citizen watchdog groups have gathered and reported information pertaining to voting machine failures. In the 2004 election, more than 4,800 voting machine malfunctions [were reported](#) to the Election Incident Reporting System, from all but eight states. In the 2006 election, a sampling of voting machine problems gathered by election integrity groups and media reports revealed [more than 1,000 such incidents](#) from more than 300 counties in all but 14 states. In 2008, the Our Vote Live hotline [received reports](#) of almost 2,000 voting machine problems in all but 12 states.

While many states and counties have addressed verified voting on their own – jurisdictions serving [10 million voters moved](#) to paper ballot voting systems between 2006 and 2008 alone – in 2008, 19 states conducted completely or partially unauditable elections.

Paperless electronic voting machines are fundamentally insecure, as they are entirely unverifiable and unauditable. The United States is one of the only developed nations in the world to use computer assisted elections without requiring voter verified paper ballots as an independent audit mechanism.

The 2008 U.S. Senate race in Minnesota demonstrated the importance of verified voting. In that race, approximately 3 million voter-marked paper ballots were counted by hand to confirm the result. Of those 3 million ballots, only 14 did not receive a 5-0 unanimous vote of the bipartisan canvassing board. [Minnesota Secretary of State Mark Ritchie](#) later said that because Minnesota uses a paper ballot voting system, it made it possible to “do the recount quickly, fairly, accurately, and with such a high degree of trust.”

As Rep. Holt has said, “It is time to stop gambling with our elections and implement a national standard that will require that elections be independently auditable, and routinely audited. This legislation will ensure that every vote in the United States is recorded and counted as intended.

Bill Summary (click [here](#) for bill text)

- Requires a voter-marked or ballot-marking-device paper ballot be produced for every vote cast in time for the November 2010 elections.
- Provides that printer-equipped electronic voting systems used in 2008 elections can be used after 2010 but are to be replaced with paper
 - ballots before the first federal election in 2014.
 - Ensures that the paper ballot is the vote of record in all recounts and audits.
 - Requires routine random audits be conducted by hand count in 3 percent of the precincts in all Federal elections, and 5 percent or 10 percent in very close races.
- Bans wireless devices, Internet connections, and uncertified and undisclosed software in voting and tabulating machines.